States of Andhra Pradesh, Karnataka, Goa, Kerala, Maharashtra, Himachal Pradesh, Rajasthan, Jammu & Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh and Delhi have deployed Tourist Police in one form or the other.

Moksh tourism

699. SHRI B.J. PANDA: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether Varanasi proposed to offer moksh tourism;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) how far this has gained popularity in the country and abroad?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) and (b) No such proposal has been received from Government of Uttar Pradesh.

(c) Does not arise.

Promotion of Tourism in Goa

700. SHRI SHANTARAM LAXMAN NAIK: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether the State Government of Goa has proposed to give permission to start floating casinos in the State to boost tourism;

(b) whether Central Government have issued any guidelines to the State Government in the matter of establishing casinos;

(c) whether Government have any policy in regard to setting up of golf clubs, casinos, water sports etc. as a part of tourism activity; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) The casinos on board in vessels offshore are allowed under the Goa Public Gambling Act by Government of Goa.

(b) Ministry of Tourism has not issued any guidelines to the State Government in the matter of establishing casinos.

(c) and (d)Ministry of Tourism provides Central Financial Assistance to States for tourism infrastructure development under its scheme of 'Product/ Infrastructure Development for Destinations and Circuits'. The projects like Golf course etc. are also encouraged through Public Private Partnership

under Ministry's scheme of 'Assistance for Large Revenue Generating Projects'.

Development of eco-tourism in Rajasthan

701. DR. NARAYAN SINGH MANAKLAO: Will the Minister of TOURISM be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that eco-tourism is being promoted on priority;

(b) if so, the details of the sites selected, especially in the State of Rajasthan;

(c) the criteria for selection of eco-tourism sites and the agencies involved in the selection process;

(d) the partnership between Centre and States in developing eco-tourism sites including providing the financial, technical and other support to the States; and

(e) the expected increase in tourism inflow, domestic tourists and foreign tourists?

THE MINISTER OF TOURISM (SHRIMATI AMBIKA SONI): (a) to (d) Ministry of Tourism promotes eco-tourism on priority. Development of tourism including eco-tourism is primarily the responsibility of the State/U.T. Governments. Ministry of Tourism extends Central Financial Assistance to the States/UT Governments for the project proposals, including eco-tourism projects. prioritized in consultation with them. Such prioritized projects, including the eco-tourism projects for the States/UTs, including Rajasthan for Central financial assistance during the current financial year are given in the Statement. [Refer to the Statement-I appended to Unstarred Question 697(C) and (d)].

(e) In view of the present buoyancy in travel and tourism, the international and domestic tourism is expected to grow at an average rate of 13-15% per annum.

Inter-linking of river and flood water

702. DR. E.M. SUDARSANA NATCHIAPPAN: Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have prepared a Master Plan for inter-linking of rivers and flood water within ten years as directed by the Supreme Court by its order dated the 31st October, 2002; and